

Seacoast Learning Collaborative

Program Approval Process

Final Report

June 16, 2003

# Seacoast Learning Collaborative

## Final Report

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Seacoast Learning Collaborative offers alternative elementary and middle school programs for students with Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorder that have previously been unable to succeed in a traditional school setting.

## **Profile**

Seacoast Learning Collaborative is a private, nonprofit educational collaborative that is owned and managed by 6 member school districts that include: SAU 14 (Epping, Chester, Fremont), SAU 16 (Exeter), SAU 17 (Sanborn Regional), SAU 21 (S. Hampton, Winnacunnet Cooperative), SAU 31 (Newmarket) and SAU 50 (Rye, Greenland, New Castle, Newington).

There are a total of 56 students with educational disabilities enrolled at this time in the various self-contained special education day programs at Seacoast Learning Collaborative. The student population consists of children between the ages of 6-21 who have been identified as having significant emotional and behavioral issues, other health impairments, Autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

All of the programs at the Seacoast Learning Collaborative are designed to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to learning dedicated to meeting the emotional, academic, and social potential of each child.

## **Our Philosophy**

We, at Seacoast Learning Collaborative, embrace the uniqueness of every child and family.

We approach them with unconditional positive regard.

We are dedicated to providing a consistent, therapeutic, and motivating environment that promotes individual achievement.

We believe that children will respond to our nurturing style and reach their emotional, academic, and social potential.

### **Mission Statement**

**We at Seacoast Learning Collaborative embrace the uniqueness of every child and family.**

**We believe that every child can be educated. We also believe that children need a safe, nurturing environment in order to develop, learn and achieve.**

**Therefore**

**We are dedicated to providing a consistent, predictable environment, one that promotes individual achievement, both academically and emotionally.**

**Always mindful of using every teachable moment,**

**We present a perpetual learning environment for all students and staff.**

### **Autism Classroom Overview**

Seacoast Learning Collaborative provides a highly structured full day program for children kindergarten through eighth grade chronologically who have been diagnosed with Autism. The program is Monday through Friday, six hours per day. The school day is broken down into 15-30 minute modules. Learning occurs in one-to-one or small group instruction.

The program is based on the theories of:

- Sensory Integration
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Behavior Management
- Total communication approach.

Each student's program is based on their Individualized Education Plan needs and modifications as developed by their educational team. The goal of our program is to focus on the development of functional life skills to encourage our student's independence.

### **Program Description**

#### **School Day**

The school day consists of functional academics, individual structured play, group structured play, social group, and functional life skill tasks. Throughout the week the children participate in art and creative activities as well as a weekly cooking class.

Learning occurs in individualized modules as well as in small group activities. Each student has a one to one staff person supervising his or her learning throughout the day.

### **Grading**

Program and behavior data is graphed on a daily basis in order to monitor progress. The discrete trial training method is used to introduce new skills.

Progress notes are written on a quarterly basis. They review the current level of performance of each student according to their specific IEP goals and objectives.

### **Program Description: Elementary School**

The Seacoast Learning Collaborative provides a highly structured, therapeutically based educational program to students who are experiencing behavioral, academic and social interaction difficulties in their current school placement. Students receive daily assistance from many different professionals (Special Education Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Counselors, Occupational and Speech Therapy Providers) who work together as a team in order to address the Individual Education Plan goals and facilitate social and emotional growth.

#### **Elementary Program**

The primary focus of the Elementary Program is to provide an academic setting with personal attention given to each student's individual needs. Our goal is to be flexible, creative, and respectful of the therapeutic process in our daily interactions with the students. We work hard to help each student reach their true academic potential, by providing creative learning opportunities. Hands on discovery, small group learning, and a carefully selected curriculum make our program unique.

#### **Progress Reports**

Quarterly progress reports are issued on the basis of academic performance, behavior, and social and emotional growth rather than letter grades.

#### **Counseling**

The goal of the counseling program is to develop a nurturing, therapeutic relationship between the counselor and child in order to:

- Foster a sense of trust with adults
- Provide a safe environment for the child to be able to explore problematic issues and express feelings
- Feel comfortable with learning and practicing more effective ways of coping with frustration.

Emphasis is also placed upon respecting the choices that the child makes in order to reinforce the necessity of their taking responsibility for his/her actions and the resulting consequences. The goal is to assist the child in making more appropriate choices, which lead to positive results.

Although the counselor meets with each child individually in order to address his/her treatment goals, the majority of the therapeutic work takes place as the child is faced with difficult situations that arise within the school setting. It is during these times that our staff provides support, empathy, and guidance in order to facilitate growth and change.

### **Program Description: Middle School**

The Seacoast Learning Collaborative provides a highly structured, therapeutically based educational program to students who are experiencing behavioral, academic and social interaction difficulties in their current school placement. Students receive daily assistance from many different professionals (Special Education Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Counselors, Occupational and Speech Therapy Providers) in order to address their individual Education Plan goals and facilitate social and emotional growth.

#### **Middle School Program**

The primary objective of this program is to develop student's skills in the basic academic areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. This core curriculum is supplemented by instruction in the content areas of science and social studies. The program is highly individualized in order to meet the unique needs of all students.

#### **Progress Reports**

Quarterly progress reports are issued on the basis of academic performance, behavior, and social and emotional growth rather than letter grades.

### **Program Overview: Seacoast Academy/High School Program**

We provide a highly structured, therapeutically based education program to students who are experiencing behavioral, academic and social interaction difficulties in their current school placement.

Students receive constant daily assistance in meeting their goals beyond the individual counseling sessions.

Group counseling topics include DBT, anger management, conflict resolution, communication skills, family issues, and mental health issues.

## **Program Descriptions**

### **Academic Program**

The primary objective of Seacoast Academy is to develop a student's skills in the basic academic areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. This core curriculum is supplemented by instruction in content areas such as science and social studies. The program is highly individualized and is combined with participation in small group activities and discussions.

SLC is pleased to offer as a supplement to the general curriculum the PLATO Curriculum. "PLATO is a premiere provider of leading edge multimedia software for K-12 schools, colleges and adult education programs. PLATO is the most comprehensive educational software available for schools and adult learning applications." PLATO provides basic to advanced level instruction in math, reading, science, social studies, and life and job skills. PLATO's management system lets us individualize learning programs for every student and prescribe additional instruction to fill identified learning gaps. We also are able to manage offline, online Web based resources so students can always get the help they need. "And because PLATO courseware is self-paced, learners master concepts at a rate that is comfortable for them." PLATO also aligns with state and federal standards including general education development (GED).

### **Grading**

Grades are given on the basis of: attendance to class, class participation and work completed. Incompletes are given as grades in lieu of failure. However, the student is responsible for making up the work by the time progress reports are issued the following quarter. Failure to do so will result in an F.

### **School to Work Credit**

Students may be eligible to participate in and receive elective credits for work experiences. Students are required to submit to their counselor a copy of their job description in addition to copies of their weekly pay stubs (necessary for the counselor to track their hours). Once a student has been employed for a period of 9 weeks they would receive a quarter credit for every 30 hours. Beyond that they would receive an additional quarter credit.

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

Paul Campelia	Executive Director
Dennis Joy	Superintendent of Schools/Board President
Kathi Harris	Program Director/Mental Health Counselor
Patrice Chandler	Program Director
Barry Rubenstein	Consultant
Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu	SERESC
Heidi Leavitt	Mental Health Counselor
John Les	Mental Health Counselor
Dennis Pelletier	Counselor: Middle School
Mike Proulx	Teacher: PDD
Cathy Zelinski	SPED Director



## **Process**

In 2002-2003 a year long New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval Process was undertaken that involved the school-wide commitment of all staff and administration. The staff chose this assessment process as a means to carefully analyze the many complex factors that make up their multi-faceted programs.

Through a series of meetings, we developed the following focus statement:

**“Seacoast Learning Collaborative offers effective programs with therapeutic components designed to promote individual academic, social and emotional achievement.”**

**Data collection activities included the development of the following interview forms:**

- Student Interview Form
- Parent Interview Form
- Student Case Study Form
- Key School Department Personnel Form
- Executive Committee Form
- Staff Interview Form
- Site Visits to other programs

The number of interviews that took place was as follows:

Interview Type	Number Conducted
Student Interviews	48
Parent Interviews	28
Student Case Studies	48
Key School Department Personnel	7
Staff Interviews	31
Site Visits	9
<b>Total Number of Interviews Conducted: 171</b>	

## **October 2003 On-Site Results**

At the October 2002 Program Approval On-Site, the following areas of need were identified:

### **Required Actions for Improvement**

1. General Curriculum: Further evidence needs to be provided that students enrolled at SLC have equal educational opportunities as outlined in the NH Minimum Curriculum Standards
2. General Curriculum: Daily and weekly schedules need to reflect access to the general curriculum as outlined in the NH Minimum Curriculum Standards
3. Policies and procedures in the following areas need to be revised: Parental access to student records; admission and discharge policy/procedure
4. All of the programs at SLC need to develop a consistent, formalized assessment system that is on-going, related to the curriculum and utilized in reviewing student progress, curriculum and instruction
5. Administration needs to develop contractual agreements and demonstrate evidence that certified consultants are providing technical assistance to staff
6. Further evidence needs to be provided that non-certified instructional staff have applied and been accepted into NHDOE Alternative Certification Programs
7. SLC needs to restructure the Autism and PDD programs to ensure that class size/range meet requirements, or have the sending district seek an IPA

### **Suggested Actions for Improvement**

1. Development of a Community Advisory Committee
2. Identification/Hiring of a School Resource Officer
3. Development and Implementation of a Supervision and Evaluation Model
4. Development and Implementation of an Orientation/Induction Program

5. Provide for Administrative Support for Elementary School Program

A formal, comprehensive plan outlining SLC's compliance for both the **Required** as well as **Suggested Actions for Improvement** was submitted March 20, 2003 to the NHDOE. The full document is available through the NHDOE.

Seacoast Learning Collaborative  
Program Approval Review Process  
Data Collection Summaries



## Student Interview Summaries

Program	Average Age at Admission	Average Length of stay (years)	% Staff Respond Supportively	% Times Staff Support Academics	% Times Students Feel Safe Here
PDD	11	2.3	76%	80%	83%
Autism	8.75	1.5	100%	100%	100%
Upper Elementary			70%	80%	90%
Lower Elementary	7.25	N/A	80%	80%	90%
Middle School	12	1.5	60%	76%	87%
High School	15	1.5	69%	69%	81%
	Referral Reasons	Student Goals	Frequent Likes	Frequent Dislikes	
PDD	Problems with others	Social Skills Conflict Resolution	Teachers 1:1 Attention	Other's behavior	
Middle School	Aggressive Threatening Social Difficulties	Return to public school	1:1 Attention Relaxed atmos. Fewer kids	More patience from teachers No Gym, Shop	

<b>Upper Elementary</b>	Non-Compliance	Return to public school Academics	Outdoor programs Computers	Academics Time Out
<b>Lower Elementary</b>	Non-Compliance	Anger Management	Teachers Behavior Program	Time Out
	Swearing Fighting	Academics		
<b>Autism</b>	Inadequate program 1:1 needs	Communication Social Skills Life Skills	1:1 Attention	Academics
<b>High School</b>	Threatening Drugs	Respect Graduation Anger Management	1:1 Attention Teachers Care	Other's behavior No sports
	Non-compliance Truancy Anger Management	Academics	Field Trips	ISS

## Parent Interview Summaries

	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>PDD</u>	<u>Autism</u>
Surveys Completed	5 out of 10	5 out of 15	12 out of 18	2 out of 7	4 out of 4
Average Age at Admission	7.6	11	14.4	N/A	8.7
Coding	ADHD EH/LD ODD	3 EH OHI/LD 1 not coded	10 EH 2 OHI/LD	OHI	Autism Seizure Disorder
Sending School Districts	Pembroke Rochester Allentown Nottingham Hampton	Epping Milton Hampton Brentwood	Epping Portsmouth Derry Kittery Maine Deerfield Raymond Rochester	Candia Portsmouth	Deerfield Raymond Kensington
Reason for referral	Difficult in school Learning Disabled  Needs 1:1 Couldn't handle him Hitting/Throwing	Severe behavior problems Academic failure due to behavior problems Many suspensions School felt child was dangerous	Violent temper No academic progress Never went to class Needs small class setting Not learning in school	Unsuccessful in public school  Not doing well  academically	Not doing well in public school  Parents were unhappy with program School couldn't handle child



			Many suspensions Behavioral problems		
Please describe your experience of the communication between yourself and the school.	Excellent Teacher always responds Teacher calls if there is a problem	Happy - have asked for feedback and have received it Open and receptive Team does not communicate well Phone calls do not get returned	Excellent Frequent contact Can get lost in the shuffle Wonderful	Frequent - daily journal Could improve	Need more openness to parent input Daily notes Notes are helpful but not always informative
Overall Average Score	4.7	3.4	4.5	4	3.5
Please describe the services your son or daughter has received while in placement at SLC	Counseling	Education	Basic academics	Speech/Language	Speech
	Speech/OT	Counseling	Counseling	OT	OT
	One on One	One-on-One Academics - unsure of specifics	PLATO	Counseling	Behavioral Consult
	Reading/Writing		Community involvement SLC provides whatever is necessary		Swimming
Please describe your son or daughter's academic program. Do you feel as	Yes - reading has improved	On grade level Program is great	Meets needs Program accommodates	Socialization is difficult - need	Basic skills - not meeting needs

though					
their academic program has adequately met their needs?	Reading, writing math improved Rewards/points help to motivate	Unclear because of communication Public school offers similar curriculum	based on level Teachers take extra time to accommodate	more integration with EH population	Staff are not trained properly Self-care, pre-voc Life skills Recognition skills
Overall Average Score	4.5	3	4	4	3
How does the services offered by SLC differ from previous placements?	Counseling service Kids are given more of a chance Class size Consistency Positive atmosphere	SLC has a great attitude Treats kids with respect Small class size One-on-One When crisis occurs it can be processed Not enough focus on academics	Smaller classes Better environment Fewer restraints Appropriate expectations	Ability to individualize Not as much hands-on	Program is more contained Teacher is more consistent Approach doesn't always work
How has your child's performance (socially, emotionally, academically) changed since their placement at SLC?					
Socially	2.2	3.2	2.9	5	1.75
Emotionally	2.3	3.8	3.2	5	1.8

Academically	3.8	2.4	2.9	4.9	2.3
If there has been progress, what would you attribute that to? If there has been no progress, what do you attribute that to?	School doesn't give up  Program/Structure Teachers  Focus on academics	Class size Staff is open, patient  supportive and encouraging Better understanding of kids	Staff support  Counseling  Teachers and staff who listen to kids  Individualized programming Staff don't give up on him	Feels safe and trusts others to help manage his behavior Reading on his own	Teacher has more training SLC knows how to work with child Licensed OT would improve progress
Please describe SLC's strengths:	Handling kids when they act out  Counseling/support Staff have great concern for kids  Class size Hang in with tough situations	Counseling Communication with home Small class size Teacher availability  Consistency Dedication	Counseling  Outstanding staff  Ability to hang in there	Patient Staff  Program is built to serve Accommodate for behaviors Teach to individual students' needs Students are treated with respect	Dedicated teachers  Program revolves around student needs Communication
Please describe areas that SLC could improve upon:	Add fundraisers class pictures  Gym, music, art	Academics - need to challenge more  Parent-Teacher	Vocational training Music room More elective classes	Socialization with other peers  Mentorship with	Speech - qualified speech therapist  Meet with parents

		conferences  Gym Activities to build staff team	After school sports  programming	other schools  Animals program	monthly More highly trained staff Share space with more typical peer group
Do you have any concerns regarding your child's ability to make progress relative to their IEP?	No - goals are being met academically	None	Concern about drop-out  Vocational services not being written into IEP	None	Progress is being made Not enough progress is being made Need more open-mindedness from teachers/staff
Do you feel the information you received during the intake was accurately reported?	Yes (all 5)	Yes (4) 1 did not remember	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overall Average Score	5	4.6	4.9	5	4.25
Have you seen any changes in your son or daughter at home? Please describe:	Yes - happier less argumentative Yes - maturing, likes homework Likes going to school	Yes - ability to stop  has improved Impulsivity has decreased Restraints have	Yes - less frustrated  Gained self-confidence More responsible Increased self-esteem	Yes - more confident  Made tremendous progress	Less frustration More independence Still major safety concerns/issues Less interactive

decreased  
Doesn't blame  
others for his  
actions

Likes school more  
More communicative  
Hangs out with less  
troubled kids  
More active and  
better behaved

No significant  
changes

## Staff Interview Summaries

### Staff Interview Questions

Number of staff interviewed

**31**

1. Is this your first position working in an academic/treatment environment?

Yes  
**11**

No  
**20**

If this was not your first experience, what type of program did you work in?

Integrated Special Needs programs  
Learning Center in Public School  
Hospital Settings  
Residential Treatment Centers  
Self-Contained Classroom in Public School

2. How would you rate the quality of the academic program?

Average of 31 Responses

Scale of 1-5 where 5 = Outstanding

**3.75**

3. How would you rate the quality of the social/emotional programming?

Average of 31 Responses

Scale of 1-5 where 5 = Outstanding

**4**

4. As you think about SLC, what, if anything, makes the program unique?

Low Staff: Child Ratios  
Small Class Size  
Individualized Programming

Tolerance/Extent program goes for kids  
 Focus on behavior/therapeutic issues  
 Flexibility to focus on academics or  
 behavior  
 Staff  
 Range of experience/expertise  
 Availability of counselors  
 Outstanding Teamwork  
 Physical layout  
 Ability to develop relationships with kids  
 Overall relationship model

5. Do you feel that SLC provides a positive working  
 environment? If so, how? If not, why not

Yes  
 28

No  
 3

#### **Positive Environment Responses**

Staff are outstanding to work with  
 Access to administrative staff  
 Problems are heard and acted upon  
 Requests are responded to  
 Great support in a crisis  
 Great amount of resources  
 Great sense of humor

#### **Negative Environment Responses**

Roles are not clear  
 People in the "trenches" are over-  
 stressed  
 Not enough administrative follow through  
 Not enough staff unity  
 Too much focus on what goes wrong

6. Do you feel you receive adequate feedback and support regarding your work?

Yes  
19

No  
12

**Positive Responses**

Feedback is available through colleagues

Feedback is informal but appropriate

Feedback is improving with additional administrative resources

End of day meetings provide support

**Negative Responses**

No formal 1:1 meetings for supervision

Must seek out supervision

It's unclear as to employees' understanding

of who is their direct supervisor

7. Do you feel you receive adequate training for your position?

Yes  
14

No  
17

Training (con't)

**Positive Responses**

TCI training was great

External training is always available

Came here with training

Recent in-services have been very helpful

**Negative Responses**

Half-days are not planned adequately and

can be used for training purposes

Integration of curriculum is unclear

No orientation program



8. What do you see as SLC's top 3 strong points?

No inservice training program

Well-rounded staff - high caliber  
Diversity of staff expertise  
Structure for kids  
Strong therapeutic component  
Commitment and Dedication  
"Whatever it takes" attitude  
Many resources  
Benefits and Pay  
Sense of Humor  
Individualization for kids  
Teamwork  
Availability of counselors

9. What do you see as the program's areas of weakness (2-3)

Lack of social emotional curriculum  
Not enough training  
Short-staffed  
No Substitutes  
Lack of supervision  
Inconsistent with behavior management rules  
Need for more administrative visibility  
Administration needs to share  
information  
more quickly  
High turnover  
Program is too separate - not enough  
integration and unity

10. What recommendations) would you make to further  
improve  
the program?

Develop training program  
Integrate programs and staff  
Social Emotional Curriculum

Develop substitute list  
Provide sick days for Aides  
Develop a model for supervision  
Increase administrative presence in the program  
Hire a math teacher  
Develop an orientation program  
Develop a personnel evaluation process

## Key School Department Personnel

### **School Department Personnel    Students at SLC Programs**

Derry/SAU 10	5
SAU 44	3
SAU 5	0
SAU 52	2
SAU 16	2
Kittery	2

1. What types of students do you send to SLC?

Emotionally  
Disturbed  
Behavioral Problems  
Autistic  
Pervasive  
Developmental  
Delays

2. In deciding the most approp. placement for your students, what makes SLC unique?

Small Class Size  
Counseling  
Dedicated Staff

Well-trained staff  
Dedicated staff  
Supports Public

Accepts consults  
Ratios

## Schools

3. In comparison to programs similar to SLC, how would you describe the academic program?  
What recommendations would you make?

Greatly improved  
Works well with district curriculum

Constantly evolving  
Individualized

Meets a variety of needs

4. In comparison to programs similar to SLC, how would you describe the therapeutic program?  
What recommendations would you make?

Therapeutically sound  
Program deals with very difficult students  
Staff are extremely knowledgeable

Generally positive - some concerns about program

feeling like a "holding zone"

5. Please describe your communication with the school.

Strong communication  
Excellent, proactive, direct  
honest  
Open, good follow through

Can be reactive and inadequate  
Varies based on specific staff

Incident reports are submitted late

6. How would you describe the disciplinary procedures of SLC?  
Have they been effective for the students you've referred?

Well documented  
Clear procedures are in place

Some programs are less effective and are inconsistent at times

Structure is solid

7. What is your understanding of SLC's intake and discharge process? Are transitions successful and is data well documented?	Adequate time for appropriate planning  Transitions have been successful	Could be tighter - needs more organization Strong follow through from counselors
8. What kinds of students would you say SLC works best with?	Emotionally handicapped PDD	Emotionally disturbed Autistic
9. Describe the kinds of students SLC does not work effectively with.	Mentally retarded Only refer EH students	Staff are flexible and attuned to the individual students' needs

## Site Visits

As part of the approval process, site visits took place to the following schools:

Newmarket 7th Grade Classroom

Seabrook Middle School: Choices Program

Dover Alternative School

Raymond

Saco Island School

Clearway High School

Parkside Middle School

Longview

The following is a summary of the information gained from the site visits:

In most programs, there is a lack of counselors on-site to provide therapeutic services to the students.

All programs visited, have strict discharge policies regarding students who are involved in threats, assaults, horseplay, bullying and drugs/substance abuse

Only one program uses daily level sheets - none of the other programs use any type of level system

# Seacoast Learning Collaborative

## Summary of Findings

## **Summary of Findings**

Since our focus statement was, “Seacoast Learning Collaborative offers effective programs with therapeutic components designed to promote individual academic, social and emotional achievement”, we have discovered the following themes that reverberate through the program and create a sense of uniqueness and therefore supports our statement:

### **Program Strengths/Differentiators**

- Teacher and all staff dedication and understanding of students’ needs is present throughout all programs
- Of 31 staff interviewed 20 of the staff have worked in similar programs in the past. This translates to a staff that has a vast amount of experience working with their respective populations
- The relationship model that is in place works to assist children and demonstrates strong respect for students
- SLC goes above and beyond what other programs do in order to manage children both academically and behaviorally
- SLC’s program provides high-level counseling services that meet children’s needs
- Counseling services lack in virtually every program that was visited by SLC staff members
- Parents view the counseling services provided as a value-added service that was lacking in their child’s previous placements
- SLC has the flexibility to manage behavior while focusing on academic achievement
- The tolerance level of SLC to work with students who present with physical acting out is a differentiator among other programs. SLC has the ability to assist its students during times of acute behavioral crises. (I moved this up as it makes more sense here rather than down on the bottom)
- The ability to manage acute behavior assists in keeping students involved in a highly structured academic and social environment which is critical to growth and development. In virtually every other program studied, students in acute behavioral crisis are discharged from the program due the program’s inability to manage their behavior.
- SLC has the ability to individualize students’ programming based on their academic and behavioral needs
- SLC provides strong program structure which assists in the students’ growth
- The most typical reasons for referral include: severe behavioral acting out, many suspensions, unsuccessful in public schools
- Parents report significant improvement in the home setting – this includes: less frustration, fewer arguments, enjoyment of school and school activities, increased ability to take responsibility for actions, higher level of communication



- SLC's small class sizes and high staff: child ratios differentiate the program from other programs that service emotionally handicapped students
- The types of students serviced by SLC and their varying diagnoses/disabilities differentiate the program from other programs
- The number of students who are on medication and, in some cases, multiple medications is approximately 75% of the total population which differentiates SLC from similar programs.
- The academic and social progress of the students at SLC, as evidenced by academic testing and the data collected for this study clearly demonstrate the program's outstanding ability to manage, treat and educate students with severely handicapping conditions.

## **Program Challenges**

- The academic curriculum, while evolving, is not fully integrated into all programs
- There is some inconsistency with respect to implementation of behavior management principles in different parts of the program
- Common public school services such as Art, Music and Physical Education, occur within programs but without a formal curriculum.
- There is no formalized orientation process in place for newly hired staff members
- While staff supervision occurs, there is no defined supervisory model that addresses staff supervision on a consistent basis
- While social/emotional and therapeutic programming occurs, there is no defined curriculum for social/emotional programming
- A formal employee evaluation process is not currently in place.
- While on and off-site training occurs and is improving, there is no defined plan for inservice training
- Communication with families is not consistent across the program. Some programs handle this extremely well while others do not meet the needs of parents effectively
- Communication from SLC administration is, at times, spotty – leaving employees wondering about key decisions

Seacoast Learning Collaborative

Improvement Plan

## **Improvement Plan**

Due to ongoing expansion of programs and ongoing program development, the following areas have been prioritized:

### Academics

#### **1. Continued development of curriculum integration**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration

**Timeline:** School Year 2003-2004

**Evaluation Process:** Surveys with sending school districts, parents, teachers

#### **2. Provide staff training in order to understand implementation of curriculum**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration

**Timeline:** School Year 2003-2004

**Evaluation Process:** Training Evaluations

#### **3. Provide certified consultants to oversee Art, Music and Physical Education in alignment with New Hampshire DOE Standards**

**Responsibility:** SLC Board and Administration

**Timeline:** School Year 2003-2004

**Evaluation Process:** Surveys with parents, sending school districts

### Social Emotional

#### **1. Research and develop a comprehensive social skills curriculum**

**Responsibility:** SLC Task Force

**Timeline:** Task Force should be identified by Spring 2003; Investigation process should take place during Summer and Fall 2003; Implementation by January 2004

**Evaluation Process:** Task force reports in to identified program administrator for guidance and support in the identification process

**2. Curriculum should focus on developmental needs and the overall development of social competence skills**

**Responsibility:** SLC Task Force

**Timeline:** January 2004

**Evaluation Process:** As the specific curriculum is identified, comprehensive review of curriculum components will take place regarding the applicability of the curriculum

Staff

**1. Define and implement a consistent supervisory model**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration/Consultant

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Evaluation Process:** Employee survey will be developed to determine whether supervisory sessions are meeting their needs. In cases where needs are not being adequately met, an improvement plan will be put in place to remedy the situation

**2. Develop a consistent inservice training schedule in alignment with SLC's master professional development plan**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration/Consultant A training needs assessment should be developed to determine overall training needs

**Timeline:** Fall 2003 Implementation

**Evaluation Process:** Training evaluations will be developed to assess the training that took place and whether or not the session(s) met their intended training goals

**Training programs should include (at a minimum)**

- a. Curriculum Development and Implementation
- b. Behavioral Intervention Training
- c. Medication Training: Identification of whether or not the medication is effective and Medication Side Effects
- d. Working with Families: How to Communicate Effectively
- e. Understanding DSM IV Diagnostic Categories
- f. IEP Report Writing/Presenting Skills
- g. Mandated Reporting
- h. Attachment Issues

- i. Sexual Harassment and Discrimination
- j. First Aid/CPR

### **3. Identify ways for the program to become more integrated**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration/SLC Staff Committee

**Timeline:** Committee should be identified by Summer 2003; plan should be developed by Fall 2003

**Evaluation Process:** Employee survey will be developed to determine ways in which important information is being communicated. An action plan will be developed to close any communication gaps.

## **Administration**

### **1. Formalize orientation process**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration/Consultant

**Timeline:** Draft by Fall 2003; full implementation January 2004; ongoing thereafter

**Evaluation Process:** An orientation evaluation will be developed to specifically ask new employees whether or not they felt the process adequately prepared them for their work at SLC. Where modifications are indicated, they will be made.

### **2. Develop a formalized performance review process**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration/Consultant

**Timeline:** Full implementation Spring 2004; ongoing thereafter

**Evaluation Process:** Employee information survey

### **3. Increase the frequency of school-wide staff meetings to strengthen communication across programs**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration; Development and scheduling of all-staff meetings to provide general programmatic and agency updates

**Timeline:** Fall 2003

**Evaluation Process:** Employee information survey

### **4. Increase administrative presence/support in the program**

**Responsibility:** SLC Administration

**Timeline:** Program Review to take place Summer 2003

**Evaluation Process:** Employee information survey

**5. Review behavioral practices to ensure consistency across programs with consideration to age and developmental levels**

**Responsibility:** SLC Staff Committee

**Timeline:** Identify committee members Fall 2003; meetings should take place monthly throughout 2003-2004 school year; committee updates should be shared through all-staff meetings, program meetings and through general communication structure

**Evaluation Process:** Discussion with parents, sending school districts, s

# Seacoast Learning Collaborative

## Appendix

### Data Collection Instruments



## SLC Staff Interview Questions

1. Is this your first position working in an academic/treatment environment?

2. How would you rate the quality of the academic program?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. How would you rate the quality of the social/emotional programming?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. As you think about SLC, what, if anything, makes the program unique?

5. Do you feel that SLC provides a positive working environment? If so, how? If not, why not?

6. Do you feel you receive adequate support and feedback regarding your work?

7. Do you feel you receive adequate training for your position?

8. What do you see as SLC's top 3 strong points?

9. What do you see as the program's areas of weakness (name 2-3)?

10. What recommendation(s) would you make to further improve the program?

## SLC Student Case Study

Name:

Grade:

Date Student enrolled at SLC:

Coding:

Diagnostic categories assigned to student:

Medical History (Medications/Health Issues)

Outside agencies involved with the student:

Evaluation Results:

Academic

Psychological

Attendance past four quarters at SLC:

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance last four quarters prior to SLC:

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Number of credits the student started at SLC with \_\_\_\_\_

Number of credits the student has now \_\_\_\_\_

Report card grades for past four quarters:

Quarter \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Number of incident reports past four quarters

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Number of counselor behavior sheets past four quarters:

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Number of positive behavior/incident reports past four quarters:

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Quarter\_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Goal Meeting Averages:

Documentation of Parent contact/involvement

## SLC Key School Department Personnel

Position:\_\_\_\_\_ SAU:\_\_\_\_\_

Number of students currently enrolled in the program:\_\_\_\_\_

1. What types of students do you send to SLC?
2. In deciding the most appropriate placement for your students, what makes SLC unique?
3. In comparison to program similar to SLC, how would you describe the therapeutic program? What recommendations would you make?
4. In comparison to programs similar to SLC, how would you describe the therapeutic program? What recommendations would you make?
5. Please describe your experience of the communication between yourself and the school.
6. How would you describe the disciplinary procedures of SLC? Have they been effective for the students you've referred?
7. What is your understanding of SLC's intake and discharge process? Are transitions successful and is the data well-documented?
8. What kinds of students would you say SLC works best with?
9. Describe the kinds of students SLC does not work effectively with?

10. On a scale of 1-5, five being the highest, please rate **your overall opinion** of SLC in comparison to the following programs:

Longview

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Summit

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Harbor Schools

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

The Brentwood School

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

The Pass Program

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Lighthouse

Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Therapeutic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Academic Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Intake/Discharge Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	N/A



## SLC Student Interview Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age at Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Stay: \_\_\_\_\_

Coding: \_\_\_\_\_

Sending School District: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Reason for referral?

2. Can you describe the goals you are working on?

3. When you are angry or upset, do you feel as though the staff responds to you in a supportive manner?

None of the time

All of the time

1

2

3

4

5

Please describe what they do:

4. When you've experienced academic difficulties, do you feel as though the staff has offered the support you needed?

None of the time

All of the time

1

2

3

4

5

Please describe what they do:

5. Do you feel safe here?

None of the time

All of the time

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Please describe what they do:

6. Please describe what you like about the program:

7. Please describe what you don't like about the program:

8. Please list your placements prior to coming to SLC in the lines provided below. Rank them in comparison to SLC in regard to which program you like most.

_____	1	2	3	4	5	SLC
_____	1	2	3	4	5	SLC
_____	1	2	3	4	5	SLC
_____	1	2	3	4	5	SLC
_____	1	2	3	4	5	SLC

9. Do you feel as though you are doing better today than when you were referred here?

Not at all

Most Definitely

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. If you could make any changes to improve the program, what would they be?

## SLC Parent Interview Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age at Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Stay: \_\_\_\_\_

Coding: \_\_\_\_\_

Sending School District: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Reason for referral:

2. Please describe your experience of the communication between yourself and the school:

Not Enough

Fair

Exceeds Expectations

1

2

3

4

5

3. Please describe the services your son/daughter has received while in placement at SLC.

4. Please describe your son/daughter's academic program. Do you feel as though their academic program has adequately met their needs?

Not Enough

Exceeds Expectations

1

2

3

4

5\

5. How do the services offered by SLC differ from previous placements?

6. How has your child's performance (socially, emotionally, academically) changed since their placement at SLC

Not at all    a little    moderate    above average    exceeds expectations

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. If there has been progress, what would you attribute that to? If there has been no progress, what do you attribute that to?

8. Please describe SLC's strengths:

9. Please describe areas that SLC could improve upon:

10. Do you have any concerns regarding your child's ability to make progress relative to their IEP?

11. Do you feel the information you received during intake was accurate?

Not accurate                      Fair                      Accurate

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. Have you seen any changes in your son/daughter at home? Please describe:

## SLC Site Visit Field Questions

Date of Site Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

SLC Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Visited: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please describe your target population.
2. Describe your academic program. Are all staff currently certified in content areas in addition to EH certification?
3. Describe your therapeutic program. How many counselors do you have on staff? How often do students receive counseling? How many students do the counselors have on their caseloads?
4. How would you describe the communication between yourselves and the families? Do you have a formalized family component?
5. At what point are students discharged from your program? Do you have specific criteria for discharge?
6. Please describe your staffing patterns.
7. To what degree do you involve the local police in your program? Do you have a school resource officer?
8. Do you have a level system? If so, please describe.

9. Do you involve the students in programmatic changes? Do you utilize a positive peer culture approach, involving the student in disciplinary outcomes?

10.If you could make changes in your program, what would you change?